

## ***Interview Questions***

*From IPLA Session with Judi Hendrix*

*April 2008*

- Why do you want to work at \_\_\_\_\_ school?
- What unique talents and skills would you bring to \_\_\_\_\_ school?
- If I were to walk into your classroom during class, what would I see?
- When a student fails in your classroom, how will you feel? What steps will you take to ensure this doesn't happen again?
- How do you get unmotivated students to learn?
- How do you know your students are learning?
- What kind of person do you find is most challenging to work with and why?  
(*"Listen for" conflict resolution skills and if they say how they work with that person*).
- How do you motivate the unmotivated student?  
(*"Listen for" student engagement and getting to the "why" of the problem*).
- How will you ensure proper communication with parents?
- What are the components of a good reading lesson?
- What would literacy in your classroom look like?
- Explain the lesson that "clicked" and everybody got it.
- What is the teacher/student relationship?
- Describe your communication style/technique with parents, students, peers, and administrators.
- Describe the components of a good reading program.
- What 3 adjectives would your colleagues use to describe you and why?  
(*"Listen for" the why in the adjective used*)
- What causes student failure?
- Do you consider yourself a leader, manager, or coach in the classroom? Why?
- If you could attend any in-service (no restriction), what topic would it be?
- If you were asked to conduct an in-service, what would the topic be?
- If I came into your Literacy Block: what would I see?  
I hear?  
I feel?
- Tell us about your literacy background and what literacy would look like in your classroom.
- What type of classroom/management program would you use in your classroom?
- How do you build relationships with your students?
- How do you informally assess your students?
- What gives your professional life purpose and meaning?
- What are the 3 most important things to establish at the beginning of the school year?
- Tell about a recent challenge and how you met that challenge.
- Explain how you could do reading in the content areas.
- List characteristics of the middle level students – special concerns.
- Describe your classroom management style.

- How would you use reading assessments to describe instruction?
- Think of one of your most challenging students with whom you've had success. Tell us his/her first name only and how you helped that student achieve success.
- All of us at some point have had a lesson that didn't go as we planned. What do you do when that happens?
- When I am reviewing applicants, what do you think is your most outstanding characteristic that would give you the edge over the other teachers?
- If I would walk into your classroom today, what would I see?
- Why did you decide to be a teacher?
- What would your supervisor say about you? (*Assuming all positive*) Okay, what would your supervisor say are areas you need to work on?
- How do you handle a situation in which a student in your class disengages by sleeping, not being prepared, or not doing any work?
- What does assessment look like in your classroom?
- What role does character education play in the classroom?
- How does a superstar teacher know if he/she is reaching every student?
- (Final question) As we debrief after conducting all interview, what is it that you want us to remember about you that sets you apart from other candidates?
- Explain how your lesson plan would look to ensure good classroom management: over plan; multiple activities; student intervention; no down time.
- What resources would you be able to rely upon if you felt you are struggling? Personal, professional associations, networks, technology sites, past colleagues?
- What do you feel is the key to student success?
- If you were hired at \_\_\_\_\_ school, what will you bring to our school community?
- Scenario – You are a 1<sup>st</sup> grade/1<sup>st</sup> year teacher and you are attending a local little league game. A parent comes up to you and asks, “What is the deal with little Jimmy? Does he have some sort of a problem?” What is your response to this parent?
- What makes you the best candidate for this position?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses? How do you attempt to overcome those weaknesses?
- What do you need to know about students in order to effectively teach them?
- What proactive approach would you take to insure good classroom discipline? (engaging activities)
- How do you know if you have engaged students in their learning?
- How would you meet the wide range of reading levels in your classroom?
- How do you show that your students are learning?
- What is your most important job as a teacher?
- How do you include everyone in your lesson?
- How would you integrate technology into your teaching?
- Tell me about your experiences with special needs? (*Listen for passion*)
- At 10:00 you are hit in the back with a wad of paper. At 2:00 everyone drops their pencil at the same time. How do you respond?
- Tell me about your philosophy of discipline.
- Tell me about your toughest discipline situation and how you solved it?
- What experiences have you had with a diverse/or at risk minority population?

- What will be your top three priorities during the first week of school?
- Describe the steps that you will take to help a child who is struggling with their behavior in your classroom?
- Why would you want to be a student in your class?
- Think about a time when you've failed; how is that experience going to help you become an effective educator?
- If a parent tells you, "My child is very bright and should be getting high grades", but you do not see this, how do you deal with this parent?
- How do you want your relationship with your colleagues to be? How will you develop this relationship?
- Tell me about a recent challenge and how you met the challenge?
- Tell us about the key components of literacy instruction.
- What qualities do you feel are important in order to be an effective team member?
- We hear a lot about treating students fairly or equally. Do you think that fair and equal mean the same thing?
- How would you deal with a continuously disruptive student? What steps would you take?
- What does collaboration mean to you?
- If I hired you, you will become a member of a grade level team. What would you contribute to that grade level as a new teacher?
- What role does communication play in student success?  
(*Listen for: 2-way, on-going, with parents, with colleagues, with administrator*)
- What is your passion? (What are you passionate about?)
- When do you ask for help? How do you know it is time to ask for help?
- How do you use *Bloom's Higher Level Thinking* activities? How do you move your students through the levels?
- Our school desires to be more like our new teachers instead of our new teachers becoming more like our school. What will you (what qualities) bring to our school that will want us to be more like you?
- You have a student who continuously misbehaves. What steps do you take?
- In your 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom you have a little girl, Sally, whose mother is in prison and she doesn't know her father. Her grandmother is raising her. She is tired and does not have much control over Sally. Sally is not succeeding in school. How will you help Sally?
- John is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grad student who reads at a 1<sup>st</sup> grade level. How will you plan instruction for John across the curriculum?
- Describe what you would consider strong literacy instruction.
- What tools/means would you utilize to assess a student current level of performance in reading?
- When you make a lesson plan, what do you think about as you write it? (*Listen for: not just the standard/objective piece, but the engagement piece; choice, authenticity; at their level, etc.*)
- Talk about what a good literacy program would look like. (*Listen for: not only all the components of reading, writing, integration, but the 5 pillars; phonemic awareness, vocabulary, etc.*)
- What do you believe are best practices in a classroom setting?

- What does differentiated instruction mean to you?
- What would I see if I was walking past your classroom?
- What percent of a student's final semester grade would be based on "work ethic", assignments such as class work or homework, and then what percent should be based on formal assessments (test), why?
- Why did you decide to go into education?
- What cultural experiences do you have?
- What is the single most important tool in the classroom and why?
- How do you work to teach ethics in your classroom?
- What are the top 3 characteristics of an effective teacher?
- As an English teacher, tell me what writing method to increase student achievement and writing in the content area, are you most impressed with and why?
- Give me a one-minute summary of what your student behavior plan would look like.